

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

~~CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM~~

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

SOURCE: Paras. 1-4: Individual with well-placed contacts in official circles (B); from a former member of the Guardia Civil (B); from a Guatemalan Army officer(F).
 Paras. 5-7: Individual with well-placed contacts in official circles (B); from a former member of the Guardia Judicial (C); from the Guatemalan Army officials (F).

Appraisal of Content: 3.

1. Lieutenant Colonel Abraham MARROQUIN Sierra, of the Infantry, stated that the Guatemalan Army has been kept under constant alert for an armed attack, but without being informed by whom; that the Army is apolitical, and the men, closely watched by the Guatemalan G-2, are not allowed to discuss or engage in politics, although they are aware of the feeling of the people that the Army is merely profiteering from the unsettled condition of the country.
2. MARROQUIN Sierra stated also that he believes that the majority of the men in the armed forces share the opinion that the policy of the ARBENZ government is contrary to the interests and well-being of the country and are aware of the fact that public opinion is also unfavorable to the regime. The men who make up the government, MARROQUIN Sierra continued, feel an increasing fear, especially since the Salama uprising of 29 March, that subversive movements may break out at any time, in any part of the country. The government is therefore making constant changes for security reasons; this was the case during the first week of April, when personnel changes took place in such groups as the Guardia de Honor, the Base Militar, and the various military zones. These changes did not include any discharges, because discharged Army men are most feared as possible opponents. Army personnel is constantly being watched, according to MARROQUIN Sierra, and the government is continually reporting the possibility of an armed revolt.
3. Concerning the Salama incident, MARROQUIN Sierra stated that there was no direct alert to the Army "because it is in a permanent state of alert." He expressed surprise at the fact that the uprising took place in Salama, which he does not consider to be a strategic spot. He stated that, according to information from the Guatemalan Army G-2, the movement was planned to extend

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to other departments in the northern zone, El Progreso, Zacapa, Chiquimula, and Jalapa. If the Army reports were true, MARROQUIN said, the plan failed because of lack of organization, lack of adequate leadership, or cowardice -- some individuals acting as planned and others letting them down.

4. In view of the recognition by the armed forces of the attitude of the present government, MARROQUIN Sierra stated that on more than one occasion "it has been thought" that it was the duty of Carlos Enrique DIAZ, Chief of the Armed Forces, to put an end to the constant violation of the Constitution and to the enactment of laws which are contrary to the interests of the country. Military men, said MARROQUIN Sierra, feel that inasmuch as DIAZ has sworn to defend the Constitution, and apparently is not doing so, he should make a gesture of true patriotism by sending a detachment of men to Congress and one to the National Palace and take charge. MARROQUIN Sierra stated that Army men are supposed to share the feeling that the Army as a body would back such a move, and that unfortunately, however, DIAZ seems to be passing up the opportunity for action.
5. In a later conversation, MARROQUIN Sierra stated that in his opinion the position now has a good opportunity for action, provided by the government by its political blunder in leaving the ODECA, so that Guatemala stands alone. According to this officer, the opposition will need funds to continue the movement, and direct or indirect assistance from other Central American governments such as El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua in the form of permission to use their frontier territories, and arms. A revolutionary army made up of mercenary soldiers, organized on three unspecified fronts, could not be defeated by the Guatemalan Army. However, MARROQUIN Sierra went on, the opposition must make some concerted action. He said it should hire a caudillo, a strong man, to organize the arrack from the outside, and success would be assured.
6. [The reasons for the fact that the Guatemalan Army, although the largest standing army in Central America and the best equipped, is unable to hold even one position on any of its vulnerable frontier zones are lack of money and lack of discipline. The Guatemalan Army man of today is no longer content with "totoposte" (hardtack) and no pay; he is well fed, and fairly well paid;¹ both young officers and the high command are used to comfort and relaxation; also the younger officers do not get along with the older ones, a major handicap in the organization of a united front.]
7. A younger Guatemalan officer on active duty remarked that "comments among the boys, from a purely personal point of view," reveal that they all agree that the manner in which the Salama and San Jeronimo uprisings were planned indicated that other Departments were also involved, and that up to the present, it had been the best-planned movement. According to the individuals arrested, the movement was to have been supported by air from "el exterior," and aided by airborne, well-equipped troops, with whose assistance it would have been possible to take such important positions as Coban, Zacapa, and Chiquimula, with the certainty that if these places fell into rebel hands, the movements would be taken up by Jalapa, El Progreso, Jutiapa, Quezaltenango, San Marcos, Suchitepequez, and Sacatepequez. According to this officer, if the co-ordination of this movement had not failed, the government would have been unable to control the situation and would have been defeated.

1. Field Comment. On a previous occasion MARROQUIN was quoted as having said that the well-paid men in the armed forces are few. He said that lower-ranking officers, such as he, are in arrears for their pay; that several are not receiving salaries specified for their rank; that he himself draws a captain's salary, and his is not an exceptional case. According to him, the majority of the officers in the armed services earn between ₡150 and ₡200 a month, which is not sufficient to cover their needs, particularly when they are months behind in receiving their pay.